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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 28
46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY
Gloria C. Vaughn

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO
ESTABLISH A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW MEXICO'S SEX CRIMES RESPONSE SYSTEM AS IT
AFFECTS CHILD VICTIMS.

WHEREAS, the New Mexico substitute care review boards are
legislatively mandated organizations of volunteers who are
charged with the independent and objective monitoring of
children placed in the custody of the state; and

WHEREAS, these boards' duties include making
recommendations to the children, youth and families department,
the courts and the legislature regarding statutes, policies and
procedures relating to substitute care; and

WHEREAS, more than thirty percent of the cases that came
before the boards last year were concerned with sexual abuse;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, among juvenile sexual offenders, sixty-four
3 percent were themselves victims of sexual abuse; and

4 WHEREAS, all of the literature on the subject reveals that
5 most adult perpetrators were sexually victimized as children;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, only twenty-five percent of the sexual abuse
8 cases reviewed by the boards resulted in the accused persons
9 being prosecuted for the crimes; and

10 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second highest rate of
11 reported rapes and the fewest number of treatment programs for
12 juvenile offenders in the nation; and

13 WHEREAS, an informal survey conducted among district
14 attorneys, children, youth and families county office managers,
15 guardians ad litem and court appointed special advocate
16 volunteers indicates great disparity in the understanding of
17 how to respond to allegations of child sexual abuse, resulting
18 in a fragmented and disjointed sexual abuse response system;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the result of a fragmented system is uneven
21 quality of investigation, prosecution and treatment of
22 offenders and victims' services that are either nonexistent or
23 unevenly distributed;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children, youth and families

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1 department be requested to establish a multidisciplinary task
2 force to study the effectiveness of New Mexico's sex crimes
3 response system, specifically as it affects child victims; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force specifically
5 follow the recommendations of the state advisory committee's
6 2002 and previous reports and identify ways to address the
7 needs of victims and to bring perpetrators to justice in a
8 manner that will minimize their future danger to society; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop
10 recommendations to standardize the response of law enforcement
11 and child protection services throughout the state; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
13 progress and legislative recommendations to the interim
14 legislative health and human services committee no later than
15 its October 2003 meeting; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the children, youth and families department,
18 substitute care review boards statewide, the district attorney
19 of each judicial district, law enforcement agencies throughout
20 the state, the interim legislative health and human services
21 committee and other appropriate groups.